

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Bloomington, Edina and Richfield schools to celebrate International Walk to School Day on October 5, 2011**

**[Bloomington, MN]** – Several schools in Bloomington, Edina and Richfield will be joining schools from around the world to celebrate International Walk (or Bike) to School Day on October 5, 2011.

Hundreds of students from elementary and middle schools will be walking and rolling to school Wednesday along with parents, teachers and community leaders. Walkers and bicyclists will receive “I Walked” or “I Biked” stickers upon arrival to school. The following schools are promoting International Walk (or Bike) to School Day:

**Bloomington Schools:**

Oak Grove Elementary  
Olson Elementary  
Poplar Bridge Elementary  
Valley View Elementary  
Valley View Middle  
Washburn Elementary

**Edina Schools:**

Creek Valley Elementary  
Cornelia Elementary  
Highlands Elementary

**Richfield Schools:**

Richfield Middle

Bloomington Mayor Gene Winstead will join Principal Raymond Yu at Oak Grove Elementary to greet students arrive as they arrive at school. Also in Bloomington, third graders in Girl Scout Troup #13825 from Poplar Bridge Elementary created posters to promote the event at their school. On Wednesday morning they will walk to school together and then greet participants at the school entrances to cheer and offer incentives to students who walked or bicycled to school.

“Walking and biking to school is a great way to build physical activity into our daily lives,” Mayor Winstead said. “In support of this, Bloomington, along with the cities of Edina and Richfield, and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, launched **do.town**, a pilot project to promote healthy eating and active living in our communities.”

Edina Mayor James B. Hovland will be at Creek Valley Elementary School in Edina to greet students and hand out stickers when they arrive at school.

“It’s important that we encourage students to bike and walk to school as a way to get more physical activity into their day,” Mayor Hovland said. “The more we do this, the healthier our communities will be.”

In the U.S., International Walk to School Day is expected to be celebrated at over 3,500 events at participating schools. Walkers from the U.S. will join children and adults in 40 countries around the world.

Walk to School events work to create safer routes for walking and bicycling and emphasize the importance of issues such as increasing physical activity among children, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, concern for the environment and building connections between families, schools and the broader community.

The event is being organized by school staff with assistance from the Bloomington Public Health Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) and Bike Walk Twin Cities.

**do.town** is a collaborative initiative between the cities of Bloomington, Edina and Richfield and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota to improve the health of our communities by engaging residents and leaders in making sustainable changes that support healthy eating and active living choices for all who live, work and play in our communities.

For more information, please contact Ruth Tripp, SHIP Coordinator at [rtripp@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:rtripp@ci.bloomington.mn.us) or 952-563-8742.

**For additional information, please visit these websites:**

Bike Walk Twin Cities

[www.bikewalkweek.org](http://www.bikewalkweek.org)

**do.town**

[www.do-town.org](http://www.do-town.org)

International Walk to School in the USA

[www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org)

National Center for Safe Routes to School

[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

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**About International Walk to School Day**

- Walk to School Day was established in the United States in 1997 by the *Partnership for a Walkable America*. Canada and Great Britain already had walk to school programs in place. In 2000, these three countries joined together to create International Walk to School Day.
- In May 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School was established to assist communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bike to school.
- The National Center for Safe Routes to School serves as the national coordinating agency for Walk to School activities in the USA.
- Walk to School Day began as a simple idea – children and parents, school and local officials walking to school together on a designated day. It is an energizing event, reminding everyone of the simple joy of walking to school, the health benefits of regular daily activity, and the need for safe places to walk and bike. Schools focus on health, safety, physical activity and concern for the environment.
- Organizations supporting International Walk to School Day in the U.S. include America Walks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Highway Administration, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, the National Center for Safe Routes to School, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Safe Kids Worldwide, and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.